SOUTH AFRICAN RADIO LEAGUE NEWS SUNDAY 18 DECEMBER 2016

Good morning and welcome to the weekly news bulletin of the South African Radio League read by [your name, call sign and QTH]

You can tune in to the South African Radio League news bulletin on Sunday mornings at 08:15 Central African Time in Afrikaans and at 08:30 Central African Time in English on HF and on many VHF and UHF repeaters around the country. Echolink listeners can connect to ZS0JPL for a relay. A podcast is available from the League s web site.

This audio bulletin can be downloaded from the League s website at www.sarl.org.za. You will find this bulletin and previous bulletins in text format under the news link on the left-hand side of the web page. While you are there, you can sign up to receive future bulletins by e-mail.

In the news today,

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM THE SARL PRESIDENT

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR LICENCE?

and

NEW OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR APPOINTED

Stay tuned for more on these and other interesting news items.

** The League President, Nico, ZS6QL, says, "As we approach the end of the year, it is a time when our Christian members celebrate the birth of their Saviour and others prepare for a period of rest and recreation with their friends and family.

This year the League experienced some real challenges, but I am pleased to say that the good ship South African Radio League is back on course and sailing into calmer waters. We look forward to more member and club participation in League affairs in the coming year. Take advantage of this festive season to recharge your batteries, take that long needed break and spend time with your families. With many people on holiday, there are opportunities for increased amateur radio activity. However, I remind you of the Amateur Code which calls on you to maintain a healthy balance in your life.

I take this opportunity to thank all our members and volunteers for your dedication to the hobby and your hard work in promoting the League. I would like especially to thank the clubs for their support in running the RAE classes, contests, boot sales, youth programmes and other activities in support of Amateur Radio.

Please remember to be vigilant and careful the threats and dangers to which we are all exposed, take no holidays.

I wish each of you a prosperous, fruitful and happy 2017.

** Have you paid your licence? You are advised to make sure that you have paid your amateur radio license for this year. If not it is recommended that you do it immediately. ICASA is not obliged to send out statements, the onus is on the license holder. If you have not paid for the 2016/2017 year, pay R525 and you are covered for this year and the next 4 years with no increases. The fee for the current 2016/2017 year is R126.

ICASA is in the process of implementing an ICASA Council decision to cancel all licenses that are not renewed within 30 days of 1 April. While still in the implementation planning stage, make sure you have paid this year s licence fee. Failing to do so will mean that you may have to apply for a new license. You may just find that some else has applied and obtained your call sign.

The League is aware that many of the radio amateurs who have paid their licences have still not received any documentation from ICASA. This matter will be taken up with ICASA in the new year. Note that all ICASA offices will be closed from 15 December and will reopen on 3 January 2017.

** A new office administrator has been appointed. Mrs Kelley Heslop was the successful candidate following a series of interviews early in December. Kelly will start work on Thursday 12 January 2017. We welcome Kelly to the National Amateur Radio Centre and wish her all of the best.

** ICASA asked tough questions at Type Approval Hearing. The League President, Nico van Rensburg, ZS6QL, and Regulatory Manager, Hans van de Groenendaal, ZS6AKV, attended the ICASA hearing on Type Approval on Tuesday 14 December 2016. ICASA Councillors and subject matter experts asked some tough questions and required explanations on various reasons put forward by the South African Radio League why all amateur radio equipment should be exempted from type approval. There is a general appreciation that self-constructed amateur radio equipment should be considered for exemption of type approval but this would not be the case for commercially equipment. In the European Union, amateur radio self-constructed equipment is exempted from type approval but amateur radio equipment produced commercially has to conform to several ETSI (European Technical Standard Institute) standards.

Type Approval exemption is not only an issue for amateur radio but for the entire communications industry. Various industry representative proposed that ICASA consider that equipment that conforms to the relevant SABS and/or ETSI standard be exempted from type approval. There is also an ongoing discussion on the labelling of equipment, in other words even if equipment complies with an acceptable standard, ICASA has to verify and issue authorisation to label the equipment. ICASA has invited further input with the deadline of 13 January 2017.

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** Draft 2017 Radio Frequency Band Plan. The South African Radio League is studying the draft band plan and is aware of a number of errors and omissions in

amateur allocations. ICASA has invited comments on the draft by 23 January and will be holding public hearings on 2 and 3 February 2017. It is however important to consider the full draft and study the impact of the draft on Amateur Radio, not just one or two frequency bands. ICASA has set out a process to be followed and the League is just doing that. It is not simply calling someone at ICASA or sending an e-mail. It is important to review the national band plan in terms of the final determinations of WRC-15 and the current radio frequency regulations. In addition, the League can make proposals for allocations that are not in the draft band plan and provide a motivation why ICASA should consider the League s proposals.

Links to all the documents will be posted on the South African Radio League web page. Input from radio amateurs is invited. You can send your input to sarlregwg@sarl.org.za. The League s Regulatory team will work on the input to ICASA during first week of January 2017.

** Radio Australia Shortwave Broadcasts to End on 31 January 2017. Another prominent shortwave broadcaster is going dark, as the Australian Broadcast Corporation (ABC) has announced that it will cease its shortwave transmissions on 31 January 2017. The station, popular with SWLs, broadcasts in the 31, 25, 19 and 16 metre bands. The move is in line with the national broadcaster's commitment to dispense with outdated technology and to expand its digital content offerings, including DAB+ digital radio, online and mobile services, together with FM services for international audiences. The ABC said it would put the money saved from ending shortwave broadcasting into other program distribution technology. Radio Australia programming will remain available via streaming, satellite, and other media.

If this trend continues then the successors of early radio amateurs who pioneered shortwave Transatlantic communications 95 years ago, may ultimately inherit the entire HF shortwave spectrum when all the commercial and military stations, etc., have moved to satellites, VHF or the frequencies above.

** Hannes Coetzee, ZS6BZP, reports that the solar activity is expected to be at low levels. No major solar flaring is expected. If you want to do your own frequency predictions, the expected effective sunspot number for the week will be less than 5. The 15 to 20m bands will provide lots of DX fun. Please visit the website spaceweather.sansa.org.za for further information.

** The SARL News team wished you and yours a blessed Christmas, to our Jewish members a happy Chanukah and to the rest, enjoy the holidays.

Now for the diary of events

27 December closing date for January 2017 Radio ZS articles 31 December last day of the YOTA Month 2016. Also, destroy your copy of the 2016 Blue Book 1 January download a copy of the 2017 Blue Book 14 and 15 January - Hunting Lions in the Air 20 to 22 January the PEARS National VHF/UHF Contest

To end this bulletin, a recap of our main news item this morning:

The League President, Nico, ZS6QL, says, "As we approach the end of the year, it is a time when our Christian members celebrate the birth of their Saviour and others prepare for a period of rest and recreation with their friends and family. I take this opportunity to thank all our members and volunteers for your dedication to the hobby and your hard work in promoting the League. I would like especially to thank the clubs for their support in running the RAE classes, contests, boot sales, youth programmes and other activities in support of Amateur Radio. I wish each of you a prosperous, fruitful and happy 2017."

** Clubs and individuals are invited to submit news items of interest to radio amateurs and shortwave listeners, if possible, in both English and Afrikaans, by following the news inbox link on the South African Radio League web page. News items for inclusion in the bulletin should reach the news team no later than the Thursday preceding the bulletin date.

You are welcome to join us every Sunday morning for the weekly amateur radio magazine programme Amateur Radio Today at 10:00 Central African Time. The programme can be heard on VHF and UHF repeaters countrywide and on 7 082 kHz lower side-band and on 7 205 kHz and 17 760 kHz AM. There is also a podcast available from Dick Stratford, ZS6RO. A rebroadcast can be heard on Monday evenings at 18:30 Central African Time on 4 895 kHz AM.

We welcome your signal reports, comments and suggestions; send these by e-mail to artoday@sarl.org.za. Sentech sponsors the radio transmissions on the non-amateur frequencies.

You have listened to a news bulletin compiled by Dennis Green, ZS4BS, edited by Dave Reece, ZS1DFR, and read by ..

73 and 88, thank you for listening

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